



Creative Crossings Society of Canada

Lee Drever, Public Relations

#200 - 275 East 8th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, V5T 1R9 (604) 618-4539

leedrever@hotmail.com www.rowingacrosscanada.com

Row For the Record

Q&A with Kevin Thomson of *Row For the Record*

Why would anyone row across Canada?

There will always be a fascination with doing something that has never been done before. As we try new things, we learn new things. The question should really be “Why hasn’t anyone yet rowed across Canada?”

So, why hasn’t anyone yet rowed across Canada?

Canada is a pretty big country. The shortest route is about 6000 kilometres (4000 miles) from Halifax to Vancouver. And even though it’s pretty, most people would prefer to fly over it than endure the long distance on the ground. But we like the ground.

So, when you consider the options available on the ground, there are many.

- 1) Driving (been done)
- 2) Train (been done)
- 3) Bicycle (been done)
- 4) Walking or running (been done)
- 5) Rowing (not yet been done)

Obviously, only one of these is appealing. Therefore (unless you add team skateboarding to the list), we really had only one choice.

How long will it take?

We are trying to do the crossing in less than 13 days since Bill Narasnek bicycled across Canada in 1991 in 13 days and 9 hours. It was his incredible achievement that led us to believe that our little idea was possible.

What is the connection with The Children’s Wish Foundation of Canada?

Kevin and Rob used to have a company that had chosen The Children’s Wish Foundation as their charity of choice. It has always represented a perfect balance for them as they pursued

Continued...



Creative Crossings Society of Canada

Lee Drever, Public Relations

#200 - 275 East 8th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, V5T 1R9 (604) 618-4539

leedrever@hotmail.com www.rowingacrosscanada.com

ROW FOR THE RECORD

their dreams while hoping that all people are in pursuit of their own dreams and wishes. Sometimes, a child is not given the same opportunities as an adult to make their wishes come true when they are faced with a life-threatening illness. So it was wonderful to contribute to the Foundation that made wishes come true for those children. The connection remains and Row for the Record has raised some corporate funds for the Children's Wish Foundation of Canada. If anyone wishes to make a donation to this great cause, they can do so through the Children's Wish website at www.childrenswish.ca.

How does the RoadBoat work?

4 rowers face backwards each tugging on their own bar. The bar is attached to gearing that drives the four front wheels. Each rower powers his own rear wheel and selects his own gears. The driver sits in the back and every now and again turns to the left or the right, and from time to time applies the brakes, which makes the rowers very upset.

How many people on the team?

5 rowers/drivers, 1 backup rower, 6 support crew and 2 film crew, plus a whole bunch of corporate partners and pre-trip support people across Canada.

Do the rowers take breaks?

Every 2 hours, the RoadBoat will stop for the team to emerge for a 15-minute stretch and brief reprieve. All food and liquids will be consumed and dispatched during this wonderful period. One of the rowers will then take a 2 hour shift as driver, and the driver gets to resume his/her rowing duties.

Do you change the rowers?

We rotate the rowers into the drivers seat to make this a self-sustaining team, but this is not a relay, since all rowers/drivers are contributing to the process of getting across the country. However, if we run into trouble, it may turn into a relay and we have the backup rowing power in the support vehicle to facilitate that possibility.

How many hours of rowing per day?

We are training to prepare for days up to 20 hours, but there will be 15-minute breaks at least every 2 hours sprinkled amongst that time.

Continued...



Creative Crossings Society of Canada

Lee Drever, Public Relations

#200 - 275 East 8th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, V5T 1R9 (604) 618-4539

leedrever@hotmail.com www.rowingacrosscanada.com

Row For the Record

How many kilometres per day?

This depends entirely on the average speed the RoadBoat is able to maintain. We are hoping for a 40kph average, which would put us above our goal of 600 kilometres per day.

What kind of people would attempt such a journey?

We believe if a person has a good level of fitness with some experience in endurance challenges, that person can train in a new sport to achieve levels of remarkable competence. None of the rowers have any previous rowing experience, but all have endured long distance challenges in other sports.

What if it breaks?

Don't be silly. But if it ever happens, we are ready for it. We have a whack of spare parts and frame braces and a whole box of multi-coloured duct tape.

Where does the team sleep?

There are 2 RV's accompanying the team where they will take as many sleeping shifts as they can squeeze in. Any rest will be good, and you may find a rower sleeping while he/she is having a liquid dispatching moment.

How many calories will you burn each day?

During training, the rowers are burning between 700 and 1000 calories per hour. If we take the low estimate, at 16 hours per day, then they'll do damage to about 10,000 very fine calorie units, plus the regular body requirements of 3000. Eating will be pretty important.

Do you need a license for the RoadBoat?

No, but in some provinces we require a permit to be on the road.

How fast will it go?

Continued...



Creative Crossings Society of Canada

Lee Drever, Public Relations

#200 - 275 East 8th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, V5T 1R9 (604) 618-4539

leedrever@hotmail.com www.rowingacrosscanada.com

Row For the Record

We have no idea, but we're hoping to reach 100kph on the downhills.

Is rowing more efficient than bicycling?

Apparently not. We have seen reports that indicate bicycling is about 40% more efficient than rowing.

So why are you rowing?

Many people have cycled across Canada. We want to do something unique (and we only found out about the 40% efficiency thing very late into the project...).

Who built it?

Many groups and individuals have contributed to the effort including YESS Frames, British Columbia Institute of Technology, Concept 2 Rowing Machines, Pocock Racing Shells and, of course, the Demented Transportation Society (just joking). But the credit for creating a working unit must go to our incredible partner, First Principles Engineering. The main engineer, Daryl Musselman has made the transition from idea to reality and found us an important partner in Bob Eiffes at Artek Precision who was able to make the custom pieces we needed. Until we had Daryl and Bob, we only had a great idea without a clue about how to make it work.

What is the most difficult part of preparing for the trip?

When you look at a finished project, you are looking at only one of a million possible outcomes, so the biggest part of the project is deciding what to discard. The only way to discard ideas is to come up with good reasons for the ideas you have chosen. It's an endless process of comparison and discussion that can only end if you have a deadline to meet. Deadlines are the best thing for projects. And we were fortunate to have plenty of deadlines.

Are you afraid of the big trucks?

No. We are afraid of all trucks.

Continued...



Creative Crossings Society of Canada

Lee Drever, Public Relations

#200 - 275 East 8th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, V5T 1R9 (604) 618-4539

leedrever@hotmail.com www.rowingacrosscanada.com

Row For the Record

Do your arms get tired?

Yes, but since everything else is tired, it's hard to focus on one particular body part. However, the bum seems to demand a large piece of our attention.

How did you train?

At the start (September 2000), even a few minutes on the Concept II rowing machine was uncomfortable, but within a very short period of time, we were doing long distances. We all chose our own training program based on Coach Craig's recommendations. Most rowers choose to do about 2 hours per day, with longer sessions (4 to 20 hours) on the weekends. We did our weight training at The Fitness Group in Kitsilano to make sure we did not injure ourselves as we went longer and longer. We used Polar Heart Rate Monitors to monitor our training progress.

Where did you get the idea?

Kevin was talking with Dean during a slow foot trip across Canada, and the topic turned to the future. Kevin suggested that he'd like to cross the country on a hand pumped railcar with friends, but it soon became obvious that that was silly. So they talked some more and decided to use a rowing stroke on a land vehicle to see how fast people could travel from coast to coast. Which is very much not silly at all!

What happens if someone gets injured or too tired to go on?

It depends on the reason of the rower having to pull out. If they can still drive, then they may fill that position for the rest of the trip. But if one of the primary team must absolutely pull out, the backup rower takes over the position. If another member of the primary team has to pull out, then the whole trip may turn into a relay event going 24 hours per day. Our coach, Craig Pond has been putting in lots of extra training hours in the event that we may need him on the trip. The problem is that he's so huge! But he does have incredible power which will save him from being tossed from the RoadBoat.

Why should anyone care about this trip?

We're not asking anyone to care about this trip. This is a challenge we have set for ourselves, and it's a fun project that has brought together a wonderful and talented group of people working towards a common goal. Many people will be inspired by such an endeavour, but

Continued...



Creative Crossings Society of Canada

Lee Drever, Public Relations

#200 - 275 East 8th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, V5T 1R9 (604) 618-4539

leedrever@hotmail.com www.rowingacrosscanada.com

Row For the Record

many more will think it's just crazy. But when it comes right down to it, it's just a wish coming true for people who believed in a crazy idea, and took the time and effort to make it happen. Make of that what you will. It does not change the trip for the people involved.

Wouldn't it be nice if we could all just find our own dream, chase it, and encourage others to find theirs? We think so.